

# TELEGRAPH

"THE AGITATION OF THOUGHT IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM."

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WHOLE NO., 87.

has form is this, viz.: He is *substance*—that is, matter say purified and refined to the final degree, but still matter. If

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The existence of a God, and who and what he is, are the greatest questions that can occupy the human mind. Pursued by the intellect alone, they are so speculative that they have not hitherto been definitely settled, nor is there any likelihood of their being so soon. The ideas concerning God change with the development of mind, and the advance of science and philosophy. Each succeeding era presents us with a new and improved theology—the efflux of the advanced minds of that time. The God of the savage is a *savage God*; the God of the civilized is a *civilized God*; the God of the sectary is a *sectarian God*; the God of the man of science is *law*; the God of the philosopher is some learned abstraction, or some *theistic, all-pervading essence*; and the God of the man of fully developed humanitary affections is a *personal and human God of universal love and happiness to all the human family*. The best idea which each thinking man has of God seems to be projected image of himself, which returns upon him indelibly exalted and perfected. We struggle to gain an adequate idea of the Deity, and use all our science and philosophy to help us to it, but still the human God comes back upon us as a glorified image of *ourselves*. After our greatest intellectual efforts we get nothing but the magnified reflection of our mental and moral natures. Our best theology thus inevitably terminates in an *auto-apotheosis*. The very terms we apply to God betray this human idea of him as a *man*, such for instance as *Him, He, His, Who, Love, Wisdom*, etc. terms predicable only of a human being.

Voltaire, in his *Philosophic Dictionary*, "bits off this tendency of the human mind to conceive God in its own image in the following manner. I quote from memory. A pismire and spider, crawling over a new summer-house which a gentleman had just erected in his garden, met, when the pismire addressed the spider as follows: "A magnificent structure this!—other than some great, intelligent, and all-powerful pismire has built it."

*Pantheist.*—“Because in the construction of my hill I manifest an intelligent design and a power, and in the creation of the whole and each part of this stupendous building I see the grand display of an evident design—a like intelligence and power, only indefinitely amplified and exalted. Hence I conclude that the author of it is none other than an all-powerful and intelligent prime.”

*Spider.* "There is intelligence and power disclosed in the weaving of my web, which is admirably adapted to its purpose of catching flies, etc.; and I, too, see like design and power in the building of this magnificent summer-house. But I don't, therefore, conclude that the builder of it is none other than some all-powerful and intelligent spider."

Piemire. "What! Don't you believe in a God at all?"  
Spider. "Yes: I believe that this building has had a powerful and intelligent author, adequate to the production of it. But your argument to prove him a piemire is as fallacious as mine would be to prove him a spider. Because the hornet manifests design and power in the construction of its nest in God therefore a hornet? Because the swallow manifests power and design in the building of its mud habitation, is God therefore a swallow? Because the beaver discloses design, intellect and power in the construction of its dam, is God therefore a beaver?"

— *Pamir*. (Indignantly, and with *odium theologicum*.) " Begone, you black rascal! you are bloated up with the venom of  
Lutidity and Atheism!"

The sciences have been born and philosophers have arisen since Voltaire's day on earth, and with them have come new philosophies. There is a great theology behind this necessity of conceiving God in our own image. Man is the apex of the creation. The lower orders of being are but types and prophecies of him. All known development terminates in the human form and spirit, which are the complex of all below them. The development on the lower planes of nature is but the fragments, diverse and various, of, and go forward to, their grand unity in man, the microcosm, in whom they center. Man is the last great and final purpose of God—the flower and fruit of the creation—to which all things else are but means. To conceive a more perfect form than the human, and a more perfect organization of powers, is utterly impossible. The attempt to do so only mysticizes the popular

Now it must be distinctly understood, that to conceive God as all — to have any idea of him whatever — we must conceive him in *some* form, otherwise our idea of him dissipates or falls into nature, and becomes identical with it. Unless God is seen by the mind in *some* form, our idea of him is a Great Nihil of the world, and thus we become Pantheists or Atheists. Moreover, a further argument shows that God

has form is this, viz.: He is *substance*—that is, matter—purified and refined to the final degree, but still *matter*; he is not substance, he is nothing. And if substance, then he is also form, because *there can be no substance without form*. If, therefore, God, to be conceived at all, must be conceived in some form, and the most perfect form we can imagine or conceive is the human, he must, therefore, be conceived by us in the human form. Try, now, if you imagine God in any other form without monstrosity, identifying him with nature. To conceive him in the form of the universe (and what form is it), or as the totality of its law and life, is Pantheism, and destroys all worship. To say that he is in some form inconceivable by us, is to say that he is an "unknown God," and equally destroys worship. To say that he is, but how or where, and who or what he is, we neither do nor can know, is so nearly allied to Atheism as to be practically the same thing. The anthropomorphism of Deity is a necessity of our natures. To be conceived and believed in at all he must be seen (by the mind's eye) as a *Deified man*—as a Divine human being. This is humanity's *instinct* of Deity, and all unsophisticated nations and people follow it. It is the inborn faculty of the race; and surely a great Spiritual fact must be behind this instinct, necessity, and spontaneous faith. We see that the *existence* of God is proved by the devotional instinct and faculty active in all ages and among all people—by the temples and altars that have gone up to him all over the world and all through time. The Spiritual fact of his existence lies behind this instinct and worship—these altars and temples. So the necessary Spiritual fact of his human form and character lies behind the instinct and necessity we are under of conceiving him in such form and character. None other than a human God can be worshipped; none other, in fact, is worshipped. None other for

divinizes the heart of man, which imperatively demands the Divine human God. After all the terror spread among theologians by the anthropomorphism of Deity, yet the world still worships Him, and has, and must, as an organized, rational, intelligent, emotional, human being. The veriest sectarian talks of his almighty arm, his all-seeing eye, his frown and his smile, his footstool and his throne, his lore, his wisdom, his justice, mercy, etc., indicating in every prayer and hymn of praise his human character and form. He uses them, no doubt, as figures of speech, but really means what he says. God must be conceived in the human form and character, or not at all. This is the ultimate of theology. There is no medium, no neutral ground, no compromise. Thinking of him in natural form and character (not as a gash or pigmy, which monstrifies our conception of the human, but in the ordinary human size and stature), renders him incomprehensible according to the measure of our capacities, and worshipful and approachable according to our devotional instincts. Conceiving him in any other form or character monstrifies him, and renders him unworshipful and incomprehensible and unapproachable.

It is very true that the finite intelligence can never grasp and comprehend the Infinite. He is infinitely beyond and above the understanding of man. To adequately conceive him we would have to be all-seeing and all-knowing ourselves. As well might you contain the ocean in a quart measure. Fully comprehend the Deity. The stream can never rise equal to the source, nor the creature rise equal to the Creator. But that does not hinder us from having a conception of him to the extent of our powers. We can still comprehend him to a degree corresponding to the measure of our capacities. Conceiving God in the human form and character does not limit our comprehension of him, nor take away his almighty and omniscience. The child has a conception of the man as in the human form and character; yet the man has thoughts, purposes, resources, and powers that neither do nor can enter into the comprehension of the child. But the child's mind expands, and with it his conception of the man and his character, yet still all along as a man. Precisely so is it with our conceptions of God as a human being. We never can adequately comprehend his Divine manhood. But as our powers enlarge and develop we have more and more perfect and exalted ideas of it, which increase in adequacy and perfection as we increase throughout eternity, yet he is ever before us in his Divine human form and character. Our conception of him, however, is not a fragmentary one, but a unitary conception, just as is the child's idea of the man a unitary

We do not never arrive at any true notions of the Deity by the analysis and synthesis of physical nature, any more, than we can find the song of the nightingale by dissecting its lilyfoot. The exclusive study of the physical sciences leads to Naturalism, Pantheism, or Atheism. We must look *inwardly* for that Great Spiritual Being—look into our hearts, analyze our instincts, our devotional affections, and see and know Him *spiritually*, if at all. Eternal nature is good as the exponent of phenomenal nature of the proximate Spiritual realm. But it is *an* analogue, *not* that of the corresponding Spiritual *being*, cannot be grasped by the mind, and, accordingly, their study *cannot* be the means of arriving at a knowledge of God, lead *perfectly* to Pantheism, whose ghost even now walks boldly about

the confines of our modern, rationalistic and scientific thinking. We must look deeply into our hearts to find *who* this unknown God is. The native instinct of the human heart is, that the Spirit is the very man himself, and that it is immortal. But the philosophers never arrived at this conclusion by the anatomization of the body. On the contrary, they came thus to the wildest and most absurd results. Some said the soul was in the blood, and could therefore be spilled on the ground. Others said it was in the brain, and could therefore be cut into slices, fried, and eaten! And others said it was on the top of the pineal gland, and could therefore be trampled with a pin! Yet the body is the natural exponent or phenomenon of the Spirit. Just so, by the study of external nature through our senses and reason, without looking into our hearts, following our instincts and cognizing their deep, Spiritual import, we inevitably terminate in Pantheism. But when we look into our instincts, our hearts want, and demand, and seek to know God, by an *inward* and *Spiritual* way, we inevitably see Him as a Divine Man, not quantitatively, but qualitatively—*not* as measured by time and space so much as by *intensity* and character—not as a giant or dwarf, but in the ordinary *here* and *there* and *when* and *where* of the human *Spirit* itself. The display of physical power in the material universe would then finally refer itself to, and center in, the Spiritual power of Divine truth, which is the real Omnipotence and the *incorporeal* mass of matter in the external universe would refer itself to, and center in, Divine love or goodness, which is the real substance. This is as far beyond and distinct from Pantheism as Spiritualism is beyond and distinct from Materialism. This revealing all physical power and nature into qualitative, Spiritualized, *divine* power and substance does not separate God from His universe, but leaves Him the central, sustaining Life and Power of it, an organized, personal, human God.

The Spirits who write by Dr. Dexter affirm God to be a principle, (*vide* "Spiritualism," by Judge Edmonds and Dr. Dexter, page 138). What is this but Pantheism? A principle is a law, and who can worship a law—the law of gravitation, or cause and effect, or any other law? If God is neither form nor substance, but a law or principle, and it is to be known only by its phenomenality, it is identical with nature. Who can fall down and worship Nature? Who can devoutly adore and pray to the universe? That these Spirits teach Pantheism is evident throughout the book, and is clearly taught—page 299. "God is the very Spirit of life in every thing, and it is eternally at work sublimating and progressing every particle of matter, from its rudest form to its ultimate end—the immortal Spirit of man." What is this but the soul-of-the-worldism of the *ancients*? Yet, when not directly teaching what he is, they talk of him as a personal, human God, ascribing to him human attributes, affections, thoughts, etc.

The Spirits who write through Ambler teach that God is a human brain in the center of the universe, which radiates through concentric spheres to the external, a Spirit or life which enters into and forms the indwelling Spirit of each and all things. (Vide pages 30, 34, 35, etc.) But who can worship a brain, with its radiating halo—the soul of the universe? A human brain, without the rest of the map, is a monstrosity. If I should find that central, defile brain, I would confidently infer the corresponding face, breast, arms, legs, etc., and doubt not the existence of the whole defile man. Indeed, this seems to be the theology necessarily implied in the theological teachings of that book. If the Divine human God was conceded to be, and taught as the *Spiritual* center of the universe (that is, the most intense human love and the brightest intelligence, which are the real substance, omniscience, and omnipotence), as well as the geometric center of the universe, these Spirits would have more nearly approximated the truth.

Let us now sum up what we have said in this short article, thus:

1. God, to be conceived by the human mind at all, must be conceived in the human form and character. Because he is substance or he is nothing, and if substance, then he is a substance, as there can be no substance without form, and if substance and form, then he is conceivable only in the human form, inasmuch as it is the highest conceivable form, the attempt to conceive a higher only manifesting it. He is conceivable only in the human character, because we must ascribe to him the highest conceivable attributes, and these are the human, of love, intelligence, power, justice, wisdom, etc.

2. That a human God can actually be worshipped. Because we can worship and adore a principle, or how down and adore nature or God in any other form, and because the non-conception of God in the human form and character is Paganism or Atheism, and destroys all worship, and because the human heart demands a human God.

3. That the great Spiritual fact of his Divine human form and character must lie behind the instinct of it, the necessity of conceiving it so, and its indispensableness to the human heart and its worship.

4. That conceiving God in the human form and character does not limit our comprehension of him, or take away his almightiness or omniscience, etc. His Divine manhood being

a unitary conception, and susceptible of indefinite perfectibility and exaltation as our capacities enlarge.

5. That looking for God through the physical sciences alone leads inevitably to Pantheism or Atheism, as much as the anatomization of the body to find the soul leads to the belief in its extinction at death.

6. That we must search God by looking into our own hearts—by an *instant* and *Spiritual* way, which impels us to see him as a God answering all our heart's demands, and the object of a Spiritual instinct.

7. That Divine love and Divine truth is the desire of the Spirit, and the final source of all substance and power in the universe,

Pittsburg, Dec. 12, 1858.

and the Council of the City of New York.

## RATIONALE OF THE BIBLE AND THEOLOGY

\* The relevance of error must be shown, or truth must remain silent.\*

Truth and error can no more stand in the place of each other, than a vessel filled with water can at the same time receive its full capacity of vinegar. The friends of truth and progress may labor ever so ardently for the dissemination of the Harmonial Philosophy, yet until error is displaced by the substitution of truth, no good is attained by any means; to coerce the presence of one against the pre-occupancy of the other. A delicacy about wounding the feelings, or incurring the displeasure of those still adhering to a perverted faith is the cause why many withhold their real convictions of truth; a wisdom as false as for a surgeon to hesitate about amputating a limb for fear of the pain it would occasion, or that the pain caused might give offense. Now I did not make the Bible; if, therefore, I find it to contain errors which my fellow beings are believing as truths, I am certainly doing nothing which my conscience rebukes me for, if, in the endeavor to disabuse them of those fables I incur their censure. The motive being one of benevolence, I am not to withhold from duty because the intention of my act is not at first understood, and hence may give offense by impinging against existing prejudices. Christ did not proclaim a precept in advance of the religious sentiment of his day that did not militate against the fash and prejudices of the generality of his hearers. There is a marked difference between attributing an opinion upon another merely for the sake of conquest over his individual paragonies, and kindly though firmly presenting a truth before his mind, so that the apprehension of it is an act of freagency. Recurring, then, that the mere collection of truth before the mental vision of an individual is no violation of intellectual right, we therefore proceed to such consideration of the subject of our text as its *ut sit* merits require.

## REVIEW OF THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

So many and able have been the comments upon the *Interpretation* of the first chapter of this book, that we shall pass to other portions of it, making but hasty observations upon the various errors in it which may casually present themselves to

In chapter 4, verse 9, the Lord is represented as saying unto Cain, after the death of Abel, "Where is Abel, thy brother? And he said, I know not. Am I my brother's keeper?" (Before proceeding, let it be thoroughly understood that these remarks have no reference to the real God and Father of the universe, except to vindicate him from a pretended identity with the fabulous God of the Old Testament.) If the God of the Hebrews was an omniscient being, why should he have asked Cain concerning an act which he (the Lord) already knew about? If it was because he was omniscient, then he was not possessed of the attributes which religiousists at the present day ascribe to him. While, if he possessed *foreknowledge*, he must have known that the answer of Cain would be that of a falsehood, and as the instigator of another to falsify it's self, how was he to exonerate him from the interrogatory of Paul—who is claimed to have been infallibly inspired by the same Being?—"Shall we do evil that good may come? God forbid."

Another consideration also grows out of this narrative, which embarrasses the assumption derived from another portion of the Old Testament, concerning the divine commission for capital punishment. "And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him." Now if the Lord constituted an especial *habeas corpus* for the enfranchisement of the first murderer from harm, by what code of equity could he be of a subsequent age—"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, thy man shall his blood be."

Concerning the flood. Several points of reasonable import, here present themselves for our consideration. First, Noah is represented as conversing with the Lord in an audible and intelligible manner ("And the Lord said unto Noah," chap. 6, verse 13, and chap. 7, verse 1). And it is also seen that after the earth became submerged, he had to, in order to ascertain whether the waters had abated, send forth a dove. But in four verses succeeding the one giving an account of the return of the dove with the olive leaf—by which "Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth"—it says, "And God spake unto Noah, saying, The inquiry here then is—why could not Noah have consulted the Lord, respecting the "abating of the waters," as well as about the building of the ark,

and afterward about "going forth" from it. "And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground," chapter 7, verse 23. But in the following chapter we find that, within a week's time, an olive leaf had grown to full maturity, which distinctly implies that the tree whereon it grew had been developed in that brief period.

At the close of the *narrative*—chapter 9, verse 21—it appears that the Lord was *satisfied* in His emotion for the destruction He had made, by “smelling the sweet savour of burnt beasts and fowls.” It would also seem that while in this mood, He made the discovery that man was prone to evil from his youth, and hence was deserving of commiseration. But who that is free from aeternal bondage can not see in all this that the God of Noah's flood was no other than a creature of Hebrew imagination and superstition—a being that was made to act exactly in accordance with the standard of equity as conceived of by Moses? How humiliating, too, the thought that the same fabled monster is the light of the nineteenth century still revered and worshipped as the God, answering all the high, noble, and pure aspirations of the human soul—that soul which dwells above all else in the universe, that the Eternal Father of all worlds and spirits should be the full and perfect embodiment of every conceivable perfection. Believers of a false and perverted religion, honestly ask yourselves whether you are satisfied with your faith in such a guide and protector as this book—which you venerate as a divine and infallible revelation—here sets forth for your respect and homage

## HUMANITARY ASSOCIATIONS

EDITOR SPIRITUAL TELEGRAPH

*Dear Sir*—Will you allow me, through your column, to invite the attention of New York Spiritualists to a plan recommended by A. J. Davis, in his "Great Harmonia," viz., under the head of "The Philosophy of Charity," for the relief of the destitute of this city! Although his project may at first sight appear utopian, still it will scarcely be denied that it is high time some new step should be taken by the philanthropist to improve upon all former institutions of a like nature (filareto chiefly signified by want of success), and thus not only set an example consistent with their superior position, but so prepare a way for the eventual removal of destitution and crime from a whole community. One of the most prominent points in this proposition alluded to consists of a plan for uniting the members and resources of several charitable associations into one grand scheme, so that efforts which before were isolated, and sometimes conflicting with each other, may be consolidated and strengthened, and thus set, if I may use the simile, like the lever of Archimedes, after that point has been found from which be declared he would move the world.

It is a pretty well-established fact that the great proportion of those who seek charity in the public thoroughfares (who, by-the-by, receive a much greater aggregate amount than is generally imagined) are, compared to those who do not beg, quite unenduring, while the genuine objects whom the benevolent aim at relieving, are pining and dying in household wretchedness. In this way is not only the aim of the charitably disposed utterly defeated, but a degradation and demoralizing institution kept up and fostered—an institution which tends to perpetuate idleness and poverty. Still, if the present season, when cold and hunger make their victims inroads on human life, is an temporary relief is a blessing.

But the object here aimed at is to strike at the root of the cancer, which has eaten its way into society. The plan proposed, then, is simply for the philanthropist and charitably generally, of all denominations, to unite for the purpose of personally seeking out the victims of want and vice in this city, and having them relieved and eventually instructed. This would be very much on the principle of a benevolent "Vigilance Com-<sup>tee</sup> which might be styled, according to the author named, a "Moral Police." Such a course of action would not only remove from the metropolises of this great country that disgrace which the present state of things entails, but lead to a gradual reorganization of society, the effect of which would be to render such physical and moral suffering impossible. Let the apathetic, too, remember that reformers in other countries are fast becoming alive to the requirements of the age, as regards the absolute necessity of some improved and efficient plan for the relief and prevention of destitution and crime, and that if they do not soon take a good ship in the direction indicated, they run the risk of finding themselves, ere long, ranked but as humble followers in the army of reform—a position not usually considered in strict accord with true American feeling.

PRAYER.—The following beautiful paragraph is from Jeremy Taylor's "The peace of our spirits, the silence of our thoughts, the evanescence of recollection, the quiet prayer meditation, the rest of our hearts, and the calm of our tempers. Prayer is the issue of a good mind and of troubled thoughts. It is the daughter of charity and the sister of meekness; and he that prays to God with his heart in, with a troubled and discomposed spirit, is like him that returns into a battle to meditate, and is ready to be slain. The quietness of our mind and charitably given prayer is to be wise in."











